

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
EARLY INTERVENTION  
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA DEFINITIONS**

**CHILD CHARACTERISTICS**

*NOTE – Factors 1 – 4 apply only to children under 18 months chronological age. Birth or medical records are available to substantiate factors 1 – 4.*

1. **Birth weight** – A child meets this risk criterion if the birth weight is less than 1200 grams (2 pounds 10 ½ ounces).
2. **Gestational Age** – A child meets this risk criterion if the gestational age of the child is less than 32 weeks.

NOTE: Developmental evaluation for eligibility will be based on chronological age, not on adjusted age.

3. **NICU Admission** – This risk criterion applies to a child with a stay in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of more than 5 days.
4. **Apgar** – A child meets this risk criterion if the child's Apgar score was **less** than 5 at 5 minutes.
5. **Total Hospital Stay** –  
A child meets this risk criterion if the total number of days as an inpatient in a hospital or extended care facility exceeds 25 days in a 6-month period.

NOTE: This does not apply to the birth admission of a premature child. Subsequent admissions to a hospital or the transfer hospital stay after NICU admission will apply toward this total.

6. **Intrauterine Growth Retardation/Small for Gestational Age** – A child meets this risk criterion if diagnosed at birth with Intrauterine Growth Retardation (IUGR) or Small for Gestational Age (SGA).
7. **Weight for Age and Weight for Height** –
  - a. A child meets this risk criterion when **weight for age** or **weight for height** is less than the 5<sup>th</sup> percentile or greater than the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile.
  - b. A child meets this risk criterion if the **weight for age** has **dropped** 2 or more major centiles in 3 months if child is under 12 months of age or has dropped 2 or more major centiles in six months if 12 to 36 months of age. A major centile is defined as the major percentiles (5, 10, 25, 50, 75, 90, 95) on the Physical Growth Chart adopted by the National Center for Health Statistics.

- c. The above two measurements should be based on the appropriate growth chart approved by the National Center for Health Statistics.

NOTE: If a child has been diagnosed as failure-to-thrive, the child is eligible under established risk.

#### 8. Chronic Feeding Difficulties –

A child meets this risk criterion if any of the following conditions exist over an extended period of time:

- Severe colic
- Stressful or extremely conflicted feedings
- Refusal or inability to eat
- Failure to progress in feeding skills

NOTE: Evidence of this criterion should be documented in the child's record and appropriate outcomes and treatment strategies addressed as determined by the family.

#### 9. Insecure Attachment/Interactional Difficulties -

- a. A child meets this risk criterion if the child appears to have **inadequate or disturbed social relationships, depression, or indiscriminate aggressive behavior and the family perceives this as an issue.**
- b. In most cases, insecure attachment in infants and toddlers is evidenced by behavior such as persistent failure to initiate or respond to social interactions, fearfulness that does not respond to comforting by caregivers, and indiscriminate sociability. The child's family must perceive this as an issue for it to be included as a risk criterion.

#### 10. Blood Lead Levels –

A child meets this risk criterion with a **venous** (not finger stick) blood lead level of 15 µg/dl (micrograms per deciliter) or more.

#### 11. Suspected Central Nervous System Abnormality –

- a. Suspected CNS Abnormalities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Infection: meningitis, encephalitis, maternal infection during pregnancy (TORCH infections – Toxoplasmosis, other (syphilis and HIV), Rubella, CMV, Herpes).
  - Trauma: intracranial hemorrhage, subdural hematoma, epidural hematoma.
  - Metabolic: Profound and persistent hypoglycemia, seizures associated with electrolyte imbalance, profound and persistent neonatal hyperbilirubinemia (greater than 20 mg/dl [milligrams per deciliter]), acidosis
  - Asphyxia: prolonged or recurring apnea, ALTE [apparent life threatening event], suffocation, hypoxia, meconium aspiration, near-drowning
  - In utero drug exposure – nicotine, ethenol, THC, cocaine, amphetamine, phenytoin, barbituates and other.
- b. This category may also include the following clinical findings:
- Abnormal muscle tone

- Persistence of multiple signs of less than optimal sensory and motor patterns, including under-reaction or over-reaction to auditory, visual, or tactile input.

## **12. Multiple Trauma/Losses –**

- a. A child meets this risk criterion if he/she has experienced a series of traumas or extreme losses that may impact on the care and/or development of the child. For example, multiple hospitalizations or multiple placements outside the home.
- b. This risk factor should be documented in the child's record and appropriate outcomes and treatment strategies addressed as determined by the family.

## **FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS**

NOTE #1 – Regarding children in the care of someone other than the child's biological parent: If the DSS (Department of Social Services) goal is for the reunification of the parent and child, the following risk factors apply based on the biological parent. The EI program should work closely with both the biological and foster families of the child, whenever possible. If there is no goal for reunification with the child's biological parents, the family risk factors are to be based on the family characteristics of the primary caregivers.

NOTE #2 – Determination of risk factors under family characteristics should be determined by family perception.

NOTE #3 – Maternal characteristics apply as risk factors to fathers if the father is the primary caregiver.

### **1. Maternal Age/Parity –**

- a. A mother meets this risk criterion if her age at the time of the child's birth was less than 17 years.
- b. A mother meets this risk criterion if she has given birth to 3 or more children before the age of 20.

2. **Maternal Education** – A mother meets this risk criterion if she has completed 10 years or less of formal education at the time of the eligibility evaluation.

### **3. Parental Chronic Illness or Disability –**

- a. A family meets this risk criterion if one parent has a diagnosed chronic illness or a sensory, mental, or developmental disability which is likely to interfere with or adversely affect the child's development or have an impact on care-giving abilities.
- b. Examples of this risk factor may be affective disorders, schizophrenia, sensory limitations, including visual or hearing limitations, and cognitive limitations.

**4. Family lacking social supports –**

A family meets this risk criterion if the family is geographically or socially isolated and in need of emotional support and services.

NOTE: This risk factor should be documented in the child's record and appropriate outcomes and strategies addressed as determined by the family.

**5. Family lacking adequate food, clothing, or shelter –**

A family meets this risk criterion if the lack of food, clothing, or a stable housing arrangement cause life stress for the family.

NOTE: This risk factor should be documented in the child's record and appropriate outcomes and strategies addressed as determined by the family.

**6. Open or confirmed protective service investigation –**

A family meets this risk criterion if the family:

- has an open protective service file with the Department of Social Services, or
- is in the period of investigation for child abuse or neglect, or
- has had its file closed by DSS in the last 3 months

A family who is receiving voluntary services from the Department of Social Services may also meet this criterion.

NOTE: This risk factor should be documented in the child's record and appropriate outcomes and strategies addressed as determined by the family.

**7. Substance Abuse –**

A family meets this risk criterion if substance abuse is having or may have an adverse affect on the child's development.

NOTE: This risk factor should be documented in the child's record and appropriate outcomes and strategies addressed as determined by the family.

**8. Domestic Violence –**

- a. A family meets this risk criterion if domestic violence is having or may have an adverse affect on the child's emotional development.
- b. This category may include physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.

NOTE: This risk factor should be documented in the child's record and appropriate outcomes and strategies addressed as determined by the family.